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Legislation Would Expand Education and Employment Opportunities for Sacramento's Youth

WASHINGTON, DC — Congresswoman Doris Matsui (D-Sacramento) applauded the passage of the DREAM Act by the House of Representatives today, which would create a pathway to earned citizenship for individuals who came to the United States as children and are working to become contributing members of our society, either by attending college or joining the armed forces.

"We must do all that we can to continue to expand both educational and employment opportunities for America's youth," said Congresswoman Matsui. "The DREAM Act would allow the thousands of immigrant youth who call America home an opportunity to give back to the country that has given so much to them."

An undocumented student and third year Criminal Justice major in Sacramento is one of many local students who would directly benefit from the DREAM Act. "Anna" said that "The Dream Act will help me and other students in similar situations pursue careers, goals and aspirations that would not have otherwise been available to us."

"Across California, we have students who have only known the United States and played by the rules, but have little hope of completing higher education because of actions of their parents," said Scott Lay, President and CEO, Community College League of California. "It is time for Congress to enact the DREAM Act to bring these students out from the shadows and, if they complete their education or military service, into their full capacity as contributors to California's economy."

As a result of this legislation, young people who meet a number of qualifications, would be eligible for conditional nonimmigrant status. Those requirements include:

- Having been brought to the U.S. as minors by their parents;
- Have lived continuously in the U.S. for at least five years;
- Have no criminal record;
- Have graduated from high school or obtained a GED certificate;
- Demonstrate good moral character;
- Are not inadmissible or deportable, and
- Attend college or serve in the military.

Upon House passage of the DREAM Act, UC Davis Vice Chancellor of Student Affairs Fred Wood stated, "All of our UC Davis students -- including those who would benefit from the DREAM Act -- have worked hard to get here, and they have all earned the opportunity for a higher education. We are pleased that House passage of the Act will recognize their accomplishments and allow them to fully contribute to our nation."

In addition to expanding both educational and employment opportunities for America's youth, the DREAM Act would also strengthen our economy. The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) and the Joint Committee on Taxation have projected that enacting the bill would reduce deficits by \$1.4 billion over the 2011-2020 period. Moreover, the beneficiaries of the DREAM Act are expected to contribute at least one trillion dollars to the nation's economy over the course of their lifetimes, according to a recent UCLA study.

"It is my hope that the Senate acts quickly to pass the DREAM Act, and sends it to the President for his signature," Congresswoman Matsui added. "I believe we can all agree that young people who have worked to benefit our society and contribute to our nation's wellbeing ought to have the chance to become an American citizen."

The DREAM Act does not apply to children brought here illegally in the future.

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